

Celebrating July 4, 2020

Show Your Patriotism by Being Safe & Compassionate

This week we will mark the United States' 244th birthday. The White House has announced that this July 4, President Trump will again host "A Salute to America," that will include, military demonstrations, flyovers, a presidential speech, and fireworks.

As former government national security professionals who have dedicated our professional lives to advancing U.S. interests, celebration of July 4th is deeply personal. Many of us have served at U.S. Embassies around the world where we had the formal, yet also happy responsibility of hosting key local associates (including political, business, military, cultural, press, and civil society leaders) at large gatherings celebrating our U.S. national day. These July 4th receptions are important opportunities to showcase the U.S. principles and values enshrined in our country's founding documents. When we have rotated back to the U.S. to work at Washington, DC headquarters, many of us have enjoyed the opportunity to join our fellow citizens for relaxed gatherings to watch the fireworks at the National Mall. But, this is not the year for that!

COVID-19 cases are increasing, alarmingly so. Millions of people are reeling from the economic dislocations caused by the virus. And the killing of George Floyd and other recent events are compelling a serious reckoning of our nation's all too persistent racial injustices. In this environment, we believe that a true act of patriotism on July 4 is to avoid the National Mall and other large gatherings and instead to commit to appropriately social-distanced celebrations to stop the spread of COVID-19.

The White House says that the military demonstrations and flyovers are intended to honor our Nation's service members and veterans. We join in saluting U.S. service personnel and veterans for their proud legacy of securing and defending American freedom. A number of us also had the honor of serving in the U.S. armed forces. We also salute all public servants as well as the many intrepid U.S. citizens and residents who are engaged in providing vital healthcare, essential services, food and other supplies that sustain us at this difficult time. We are concerned that in the face of the extreme hardships so many Americans face, and the challenges the U.S. military must confront to maintain its operational readiness amidst the pandemic, the resources devoted to military displays and large firework shows are a misplaced drain on U.S. coffers.

Accordingly, we propose to honor the many military and civilian heroes who exemplify the best of America, by contributing to charitable organizations that are supporting veterans and the many

other communities that need our support. That will be our “Salute to America.” The Steady State¹ invites others to join us.

¹ [The Steady State](#) [hyperlink] is a group of veterans of the U.S. National Security Community who believe that President Trump, unfit for the Presidency, presents a clear and present danger to America’s safety and security. The Steady State, including former Intelligence Officers, defense policy makers, Ambassadors and diplomats and Congressional staffers, have served the country during Democratic and Republican administrations. Some have been lifelong Democrats; others, Republicans; some are resolutely independent.